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## ESL and ELL Program Effectiveness: Providing Academic Success for Students

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ESL and ELL Program Effectiveness: Providing Academic Success for Students

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this study was to examine the effectiveness of English as a Second Language and English Language Learners—ESL and ELL respectively—programs in helping students whose native language is not English achieve academic success in school. The general issue with these programs is that more often than not, students whose native language is not English are placed in separate classrooms from their peers, which leads to an academic disadvantage because the focus is on language acquisition. This does not provide other forms of long-term knowledge that will help the students. In other words, ESL and ELL programs are efficient when it comes to teaching students the English language, but some may focus on language acquisition more, and disregard other materials or limit social interactions with the students in the programs. The theory used in this study was Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which states that there is a social component to English acquisition since an English learner requires an individual who is more knowledgeable to teach them the language, and interaction between the two is crucial for the success of language acquisition to be possible. The methods used were a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches. I was also able to have first-hand knowledge on the use of a different language in a classroom setting that might not be native to all students. This research includes an extensive literature review on literature regarding ESL and ELL programs, and a service-learning component in order to analyze the effectiveness of such programs, and the impact that they have on students, primarily those who are in elementary school. This research concludes that ESL and ELL programs are effective when it comes to non-native English speakers achieving academic success in their education because of the incorporation of other material, such as language arts, rather than focusing solely on language acquisition, and that the inclusion of another language in the classroom helps students with their cognitive development.

### **Introduction**

As the migration rate from other countries to the United States increases, the need for assimilation or immersion into the English language is rising. Though there is no official language in the United States and the majority of the population speaks more than one language, the dominant language spoken in the United States is English, so it has become important for the United States to have children from other countries to speak the language. In California, as of 2016, 42.6% of students who are classified as English learners and Fluent English Proficient speak a language other than English at home, making English language acquisition something they need to learn outside the home and in school (California Department of Education, 2017). Because of this, schools have implemented programs into their curriculum to benefit and meet the needs of students who are learning the English language, and often disregard the students' native language. In the Monterey County for the 2016-2017 school year alone, 30,590 students are English learners, with 94.21% of those students speaking Spanish (California Department of Education, 2017). Furthermore, many issues arise with the installment of these programs that can affect the students' language acquisition, communication skills, cognitive abilities, and identities as English learners living in a place that requires them to separate the use of their native language and the new second language.

My research on this topic includes my service learning opportunity at the Dual Language Academy of the Monterey Peninsula (DLAMP). The Dual Language Academy is a charter school that “offers a unique immersion opportunity for students to become fluently bilingual and bi-literate in English and Spanish” (Dual Language Academy of the Monterey Peninsula, 2017). The Dual Language Academy divides the school day into half in order to have students learn in Spanish for one half of the day, and English for the second half. Currently, the school

accommodates K-8, and has teachers who “specialize in developing second language fluency in children” (Dual Language Academy of the Monterey Peninsula, 2017). The dual immersion setting that the students are in increases the possibility of achieving second language fluency.

Through my service there, I was able to observe and participate in the language acquisition of both native and non-native English speakers; this in turn changed the focus of my research. My research focus changed because I wanted to observe English learners, but I was in a setting that had a mixture of students at different levels and with different native languages. My research confirmed that not all programs are the same, and that there is a chance for a student who has disadvantages in comparison to another student, based on the model or style, to succeed in school as much as the next. Through prior experience, I have observed that these programs tend to be short-term in the educational journey of English learners, and often have limited presence in school or out of school for the students involved, but some go to great lengths to promote academic success. The questions that guided my research are the following:

- How effective are ESL and ELL programs for students learning English as their second language?
- How does having a bilingual teacher affect the language acquisition of the students in said programs?
- How do non-native English speakers compare to native English speakers when it comes to educational achievements, such as having academic success (higher test scores, literary proficiency)?

English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are programs that teach the English language to non-native speakers. Similarly, English Language Learners (ELLs) are defined as being students who are in certain programs as a result of limited literary skills in English, and are then

able to focus on language acquisition (Wyoming Department of Education, 2017). These type of English language programs tend to be the most common, and they share similarities and often times, are used together; therefore, it seemed appropriate to look into the ability of ESL and ELL programs in educating students in the English language and language acquisition.

### **Literature Review**

#### *Effects of ESL or ELL Placement*

With the rate of non-native English speakers rising over the past few decades, schools in the United States are providing more academic content in elementary, middle, and high school in order to provide ESL and ELL students with sufficient English prior to entering college. For many students, their experiences in ESL and ELL programs are that they are tend to focus on coursework centered on improving the students' ability to use the language and has little material that adds to students' knowledge. Callahan, Wilkinson, and Muller (2010), as well as Frisco (2009), claim that this often leads to the exclusion of other material, such as math and science, which leaves the students with a deficit of academic knowledge. Essentially, their education is not well rounded, leading to academic gaps and different levels of learning that could be mended with the inclusion of both material and language acquisition. Krashen, as cited by Good, Masewicz, and Vogel (2010) states that:

Bilingual education, English immersion, and sheltered English are examples of programs currently used to teach English language acquisition. When children receive a quality education in their first language they acquire knowledge and literacy in that primary language that can then be transferred to a second language. . . Students in well-designed bilingual programs acquire academic English at least as well as, and often better than, children in English-only programs. (331)

Having the native language of students in the classroom can help them academically, and thus, can lead to higher literacy and familiarity with English, making it easier for students to transition



from one language to the other, but more importantly, language acquisition needs to be a feature of the classroom, and not the sole educational material.

Furthermore, the format of ESL programs is crucial as English learners advance throughout their education. Schools are in charge of catching the English learners up in order for them to match students who do not need assistance in learning the English language. More often than not, students take separate classes or are in another class to engage in instruction that will further improve their English. Though this is supposed to help them, it takes them away from actually learning new material. Good, Masewicz and Vogel (2010) describe that more often than not, many schools in the United States fail to close the gap due to there being a misunderstanding of the students' needs, and teachers lack certain tools to communicate better and understand the students' perspectives. Another effect that results from ESL placement is that there are often groups of students (RFEPs) left out who have been re-classified, and reached proficiency in the language. Saunders and Marcelletti (2013) state that re-classified students do not get included into the research on English learners, which is imperative because these students were able to become fluent in the language to the point that they often outperform native English speakers. This exclusion has the possibility to lead to future data that will be unclear, inaccurate, or not representative of all students.

The following sections explore different facets of ESL and ELL programs, which include if the effectiveness of the programs affects the academic opportunities of English learners, and if the academic success they have affects others in their lives (i.e. parents, teachers). The following studies' focus is on academic achievements obtained, and how through the process of acquiring a new language, there are challenges that English learners must then overcome using strategies provided by the respective programs, instructions, and approaches.

*Academic Achievements of Immigrant/ Minority Students*

Programs aimed at increasing students' capabilities often push students to strive for success, while simultaneously learning a new language. There is a pressure for immigrant or minority students to have academic achievements, and more often than not, it is a difficult journey for most students to follow due to the lack of support outside of the programs. However, many of these students have advantages over other students with or without the support of programs when it comes to going to college and their linguistic capabilities, which can often depend on whether they are first generation ESL students or second generation students (Callahan and Humphries, 2016; Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller and Frisco, 2009). Street (2017) includes that frequency and experience are key factors, which contribute to long-term language processing and acquisition in students learning a new language, and often there is an outperformance by the non-native English speaker. However, it is noted by Street that "it is most likely the case that non-native speakers rely more on other 'non syntactic' cues when processing complex grammatical structures than native speakers" (2017, 200).

In regards to second-generation students, they tend to be more successful in school, and their status as immigrants is not a detrimental factor in their ability to learn, whereas for first generation students it can be (Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller and Frisco, 2009). Because individuals who obtain English as a second language tend to be immigrants to the country, Callahan and Humphries (2016) focus on whether there is an immigrant advantage because of their linguistic skills, and whether the rate of going to college is higher. Callahan and Humphries findings concluded that the "immigrant English learners fail to experience the same returns to college preparatory math course taking", and this highlights that they are not being offered an equal stance when, or they are at an "immigrant undermatch" (2016, 287).

When it comes to communication, Good, Masewicz and Vogel (2010) discuss that academic achievement correlates to the communication that students and their parents have with teachers and the school, and because of the lack of communication, there is an achievement gap. Communication is needed from both the parents of the students, and the teachers in order to close the achievement gap that is ever widening as a result of placing blame on the ELL students inability to learn (Good, Masewicz, and Vogel, 2010, 323). Teachers and parents were also concerned with the fact that there was a lack of preparation in multiculturalism on behalf of the teachers, which leads to the disconnection between the student and the teacher since the student does not feel as if their native culture and language is valued (Good, Masewicz, & Vogel, 2010). Guo and Mohan (2008) examined communication between ESL parents and teachers because of the lack of dialogue between these two groups that are highly influential on students and concluded that:

ESL parents and teachers share a common concern that ESL students graduate from high school at a rate that reflects their abilities and achievements. It would be appropriate for a partnership of the ESL parent organisations and the ESL teacher organisations at the school district level, and above, to focus on this common concern and to work for changes in the education system, which will bring it nearer to reality. (32)

Communication goes beyond the teacher and student, and involves the parents as well. A good rapport between the parents and teachers is required to avoid conflicts or miscommunication on the students' education.

Standardized test are often a problem for ESL and ELL students. Kelley and Kohnert (2012) discuss that cognates can be of help to students when it comes to testing since cognates are translation equivalents between two languages. Kelley and Kohnert (2012) highlight that many students often find themselves in testing situations in which they are ill prepared because they do not receive instruction in Spanish, only in English. This lack of preparedness can lead to

students performing significantly lower in certain subjects, such as Algebra II and chemistry, while in the K-12 school system (Callahan et al, 2009). However, Kim and Garcia (2014) have concluded that as students are promoted out of the education system, many adult English language learners recall their experiences and perceptions with such programs, with the consensus being that they were useful, and there were opportunities presented to them that allowed them to succeed after school. This different perception of learning experiences can be due to the type of program an individual is in, or the students' ability to develop their own teaching and instructional methods to meet their needs.

*Language acquisition strategies, restraints, and benefits*

Though there is a constant increase of English language students that are proficient and fluent, there are still restraints toward language acquisition, and such restraints affect the number of students that are able to become proficient enough and be able to practice their language use. One such restraint for the acquisition of the language can be age. At times, as stated by Murra, parents may "know insufficient English" because they may not speak English themselves or have limited comprehension of the language, and that by having the students learn "[at] the earliest stages of the [their] language development a consistent method of source and presentation of the two languages should be observed" (1954, 192). There are those who acquire a second language at an early age, while others do so later in life, and there is evidence that states that learning a new language at an earlier age is more successful than having a person learn later on in life.

Mayberry and Lock (2003) discuss that because of the difference ages that people might be when they learn a second language, they can be influenced or affected differently because of it, and that the acquisition of a second language early can have a greater impact on the individual's ability to learn language effectively. Mayberry and Lock (2003) identified in a study

they conducted that language experience during the primary years has a great impact on the individual's ability to learn language, and there is a difference between first language and second language acquisition. Because age is an important factor in language acquisition, many instructional methods and approaches help make language acquisition stronger, and it is continuous in order for learn English fluently throughout a long span of time. Ellis (2008) observed the dynamic cycle of language acquisition, language change, and language use and identified the following about language usage:

Language usage involves consciousness and learning and dialogue and dialectics, and it is motivated by cultural forces whether it occurs in naturalistic or formal contexts. Socially guided consciousness is the motivator for growth and change in all contexts and all cognitive domains. (243)

To focus solely on language is to forget about the fact that there are other components, and therefore it can affect students in many ways that are more personal. Moreover, language usage is a complex process and its different attributes—consciousness, learning, dialogue, and dialect—should be required in all instructions, models, and approaches in order to teach a second language effectively. In addition, the type of educational models used can affect English language learners differently.

The two most used instructional models to teach language are the dual-language and the transitional-bilingual education models. Both models include English along with another language, typically Spanish, and teach both, but the key difference is that the dual-language model continues to utilize both language, whereas the transitional-bilingual model eventually decreases the use of the native language and focuses on English (Murphy, 2014). Murphy's research included 1,400 first and second grade students that participated in either the dual-language educational model or the transitional-bilingual educational model, and they tested five different variables: alphabet/sight words, reading, writing, listening, and verbal expression

(2014). Murphy's concluded that among the first grade students there was consistency from the pretest to the post-test, but the groups did not experience significant between-subject effect, while the second grade students had similar results, but there was a difference when it came to Verbal Expression, one of the five variables analyzed (Murphy, 2014).

Self-regulation learning (SRL) strategies are of use in learning processes as well. Seker defines SRL as being "an active process through which learners make necessary decisions and execute appropriate strategies throughout the learning process" (601). It requires the learner to be aware of how their learning process is, and decide which route to take in their learning in order to better manage it, and know what works for them (Seker, 2015). Seker (2015) states that unlike educational models, the implementation and success of SRL strategies is dependent on an individual's awareness of their own learning process. In addition, language and literacy development starts with vocabulary knowledge by the English learner, and is a determinant of school success (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011). Ellis (2008) states that "language learning and language use are dynamic processes in which regularities and systems arise from the interaction of people, brains, selves, societies, and cultures using languages in the world" (233). This is important over the course of a student's education because English proficiency is possible, and Barrow and Markman-Pithers (2016) highlight that "English proficiency and educational attainment are associated with higher wages" meaning that second language acquisition has results outside of a student's academic career. Essentially, the development of a second language, in this case English, provides more opportunities, and has positive effects that extend beyond the classroom.

Another important aspect to language acquisition is how well teachers are able to accommodate students with their instructional approaches, and if the teachers are qualified to

teach them the English language. Instruction for English learners varies now, as it has in the past and the different forms of instruction ultimately affect how much substance is retained, along with how the material was useful and if it is practiced over a long time. Two examples that Kim (2008) highlights are oral-only and integrated instruction. Integrated instruction refers to an oral and written plan while oral-only focuses on just that, and excludes the written portion of the instruction. Kim (2008) establishes that approaches in teaching matter, and that there is the chance that some may be more effective than others may. It is “evident that school instruction was an important source of language input for the students developing their English skills”, but more research in different areas is required to meet the challenges that arise from evaluating such instruction and approaches (Kim, 2008, 446).

The accountability of teachers also comes into play, and the preparedness of programs that offer students the opportunity of learning the English language is also challenged (Turkan & Buzick, 2016). Lazaraton and Ishihara (2005) said the following about teacher techniques and practices with students:

The numerous instructional decisions that teachers make in practice must be consistent with each other as well as with the teacher's principles/beliefs; this consistency can be perhaps best attained by examining one's teaching beliefs from a theoretical perspective and establishing a rationale for each instructional decision. (539)

Teachers are ultimately responsible for the success the students have with their English language acquisition and, thus, having teachers that are aware of their techniques, beliefs and perspectives, as well as their nonverbal behavior as stated by Lazaraton and Ishihara (2005) can result in successful teaching practices. The evaluation of such programs can determine the success that the teachers have in educating students as well. Because teachers are an important part of the English language education that English learners have, their input is also highly valued.

Jamieson, Chapelle, and Preiss (2005) conducted an evaluation on CALL, material used in an

online English resource called Longman English online (LEO) and determined that “CALL material had good language learning potential, meaning focus, and learner fit” for it being an online tool used to teach students a new language. However, most literature discussed only mentions programs available through schools and face-to-face interactions and exclude online resources. Nonetheless, other resources online have the ability to aid the development of a second language and have an impact on students.

This literature review is meant to highlight some of the different factors that exist in learning the English language, and how ESL and ELL programs, and further development of these programs, are crucial for the education of many people living in the United States. By discussing the three themes found in the literature: 1) the effects of ESL/ELL placement, 2) academic achievements of immigrant/ minority Students, and 3) language acquisition strategies and restraints, it can be determined that English learning students, with the same opportunities at academic success as their English native peers, can excel in their education. There is research on the matter, and many scholars have taken interest on whether migrant students or children of migrant parents are disadvantaged in school because of the fact that English is a second language rather than the first. Many have conducted studies to evaluate this notion, and assess if programs are effective, and which ones demonstrate higher effective rates.

### **Theory**

Theories are essential to research because with a theory, one is able to support an idea or concept, which adds validity and structure to the topic at hand. Lev Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory applies to ESL and ELL programs in that it has to do with social interaction and how through social interaction, a child is able to learn more effectively. In addition, sociocultural theory is used to explain how ESL and ELL programs play a role in the lives of English learners



within the context of teaching them the English language and the style of the classes. This theory aids to identify that there is a social component to English acquisition. The effectiveness of the programs can be observed more efficiently with this theory since it consists of social interaction between a teacher and student, and based on this relationship, it can be determined if social interactions aid students when it comes to academic achievements such as graduating, or going off to college in pursuit of higher education.

Lev Vygotsky was a Russian psychologist whose work was translated into the English language in 1962 after being undisclosed for years (Burkholder and Pelaez, 2000). His work would later contribute to the field of child development. Vygotsky discusses the connection that social interactions have on the cognition of students learning. The opportunities provided and the effectiveness of ESL and ELL programs is an issue that is much involved with the cognition that English learners have. Effectiveness of programs involves interactions within the community, and it is about learning another language, so the programs require all participants to be on the same page. It is also a theory that holds ground in human development. Sociocultural theory looks into how cognitive development relates to different contexts, such as cultural, social, or historical, in an individual (Wertsch, 1998). The individual's experiences shape how he or she interprets the world, and cognition is able to be because of social interactions (Jaramillo, 1996, 133).

An important concept of sociocultural theory is the "Zone of Proximal Development", which states that individuals are able to learn from others within close proximity. Vygotsky described it as being "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1980, 86).

Another important concept of the theory is the idea of the “More Knowledgeable Other.” This concept describes that children gain more knowledge or insight from interacting with other individuals that possess superior knowledge, and this aids cognitive development (Santrock, 2016). Lastly, scaffolding goes hand in hand with the “More Knowledgeable Other” in that that individual can provide support, but it is more so for the purpose of setting a foundation, and then decreasing the amount of help provided. Scaffolding is a way of shaping a child’s education, and it requires social interaction in order to create change in a child’s learning environment and behavior (Burkholder and Pelaez, 2000).

In relation to what scholars are doing with Vygotsky’s theory, many have applied it to education of all sorts, such as education specialized for language learners, gifted students, and students with disabilities, and look into the beliefs or perceptions of the students in specialized education. The analysis done when it comes to language learners revolves around techniques that are useful to the students and the different programs themselves. Yang and Kim, scholars who have done sociocultural analysis, (2011) explore beliefs or conceptions of learning a second language in a study-abroad context. The findings concluded that the participants in the research wanted to expand their communication skills at the beginning, but some of the participants had changed their belief. Because of this change between the participants, Yang and Kim refer to remediation, a concept in sociocultural theory, in order to describe the change, which is due to the participant not having enough practice or participation and thus not being as successful in learning a second language.

### **Methodology**

The research methodology that I have used is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods. In order to collect data on ESL and ELL programs, I first utilized text-based

data from databases that had a large collection of peer-reviewed articles on the topic, and I looked at the information provided on the California Department of Education government website in order to see the statistics on these programs in the Monterey County. The literature I included fell under three themes, which are present in the literature review and highlight that there is interest on the topic, and that scholars have previously assessed the effectiveness of language learning programs. In addition, to gather more knowledge and first-hand experience with these types of programs, I did an internship at the Dual Language Academy of the Monterey Peninsula (DLAMP) located in Seaside, CA during the second stage of my research. I chose this site in order to observe and participate in a language arts classroom that is in Spanish, and has students focus on the language during their time in this specific class.

Because of the group that I was working with, young elementary-age students, the students' names are not included and there is no discussion in this study about the students being participants. My observations in the classroom will be the majority of the information retrieved, and included in the research (Appendix A). I observed three different groups of students six times over the course of six weeks who had their language arts class in Spanish from September 2017 to November 2017. I was only present on Wednesdays, and I stayed the entire school day, which was from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., so that I could be there for the same amount of time for each group of 20 or so students. The teacher, who I will refer to as teacher A, changed the routine for Wednesdays in order to have me be an incorporated part of the classroom, and provide assistance to the students in a small group setting as well as a whole class setting. The routine for Wednesdays was to have the students turn-in and write down their homework, do a class theater reading, and break off into groups of five, three of which did an activity within their group to practice their literacy, vocabulary, or grammar and I did an activity with one group,

while teacher A did an activity with another group. After about 20 minutes, the groups would rotate, and I would work with a second group. All three of the classes that I interacted with follow a routine that can change from one day to another (i.e. Tuesday is different from Wednesday).

During my time there, I was an active participant in the classroom, which consisted of both native and non-native English speakers, working alongside the teacher supervising me. Some of my responsibilities were to make sure the students practiced their Spanish skills, did their homework, led class readings with the students, and interact with the students in whole class and small group settings with the purpose of improving the students' Spanish writing, vocabulary, and understanding skills. I also observed the students during class time, and monitored them during certain activities, such as individual reading time, and play readings as a whole class. The purpose of observing and participating was to gather information on a different method of immersing students into two languages that they gained knowledge of through their attendance of this charter school. The first-hand experience along with the text-based research conducted, helped me evaluate the effectiveness of ESL and ELL programs in a dual language immersion school in the Monterey County. It also helped me analyze if non-native English speakers might have the same academic success as native English speakers.

### **Findings**

The text-based research and the first-hand experience with a dual language immersion program testify that ESL and ELL programs are effective when it comes to non-native English speakers having academic success in their education because of the ESL and ELL programs' incorporation of other material rather than focusing solely on language acquisition. The literature on the subject matter highlights key points such as how placement plays an important role in

determining whether students are able to learn English effectively, and if they are able to obtain academic achievements or success while learning a new language. Much of the literature concludes that age is a factor in language acquisition and that the promotion out of these programs greatly skews the data of how many students are ESL and ELL students and how many are post-ESL and ELL students, as well as if English language education can be more beneficial sooner rather than later on in life.

When applying the literature to my observational work, I noticed that the students had a balance in their daily routines, and this balance allowed for a more fluid transition from one language to the other without negatively affecting what they had learned in other classes since they move from one class to another every day, multiple times a day. The students had a fair amount of practice in both languages, and the teachers teach the material learned in class either in English or in Spanish. When I was present at the Dual Language Academy, the classroom I was in was a third grade language arts class in which the students learned in Spanish. The three third grade teachers worked together to ensure the academic success of the students. The children were very comfortable with the transition from English to Spanish, and most students easily switch from one language to the other just as they would from one material to the next. There were students who found it difficult to remember that they were in a classroom taught in Spanish, and were not as quick to immerse themselves into the routine of the class, but those instances were few, and ultimately, the student would participate alongside the other classmates.

It is important to note that the goal of the dual immersion program at the Dual Language Academy is to have students speak fluently in English and Spanish, and I witnessed the ease in which students whose first language is Spanish were able to go back and forth between the two languages. As for the students whose native language is English, they were able to also transition

from one language to the other, but there was more variety in the language skills that the students had. But because of the program places those with higher skills in a language with those who have lower skills, the students are able to help each other, and the teacher is not left to be the only one enriching the education of the students.

From this, I was able to gather that students who are non-native English speakers have an easier time transitioning from one language to the other and have a greater understanding of the tasks that the teacher assigns in class. Though the focus of my research was to observe non-native English speakers, my opportunity to interact with native English speakers who were learning Spanish as a second language highlighted that there is variation in how well the students are able to master the language, and that there is a variety of language acquisition levels in a single class. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs and to determine whether they provide adequate support to English language learners. I believe that there is enough support to determine that these programs are successful, but some approaches are better than others are, and the one used at the local school I observed has proven to have much success.

### **Conclusion**

Dual language immersion programs are a great benefit to the community for those wanting to learn English, and have academic success in order to pursue jobs, higher education, or other opportunities that has English as language needed. These programs are crucial to non-native English speakers since it provides them with the tools to have academic success, and have the same, if not, similar opportunities as their peers who are native English speakers. As a non-native English speaker myself, I can say that programs like these have had a positive impact on my education, and allowed me the opportunity to master a second language, which in turn, has

opened doors to many more opportunities, such as being able to pursue higher education.

Programs such as these hold many benefits for today's youth, and allows them to help each other and those around them through their education.

The research I have gathered and conducted makes it clear that there is great need for these programs across the United States, and encouragement of such programs is necessary because of the many benefits they provide our young students and our communities. Being supportive of such programs, helps raise awareness and it allows a larger population to have the opportunity to advance in their education, and be fluent in another language, which will allow them to ultimately, contribute more than just their labor to society. Education is key to success and being able to be bilingual or monolingual is a great skill to have in a world whose population is constantly growing, and learning a different language is essential for a variety of reasons, which include improved cognitive skills, communication, and overall opportunities. I hope that the research presented here contributes to today's current work, and that programs such as ESL and ELL become common knowledge in communities across the United States and receive more funding.

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## Appendix

### *Observation Notes at the Dual Language Academy*

Before I started my service learning at DLAMP, I met the teacher I would be doing my service with, and I met with the site supervisor. We went over the learning agreement, as well as discuss professional procedures and instructional suggestions. I was able to learn that there are certain rules that as a service-learning student I had to follow because I was coming into the school environment, and that I would be a more active participant in the classroom than prior service learning experiences had allowed.

The following notes were written during “free time” (break, lunch) in which I was able to gather my thoughts and jot down what I had seen that day that meant the most in the moment, and some were written a day after. In order for the notes to be clear, most are rewritten in complete sentences and more detail was added.

- September 27, 2017
  - First day at DLAMP
  - I had a prior meeting with the teacher I was going to be supervised by so that I could discuss my capstone project with her, and see how to best be a part of the class. It was a brief meeting of about 15 minutes.
  - On the first day, I introduced myself to the three different groups of students at the beginning of class in Spanish. The students seemed to be okay with me being there.
  - Maintained focus on the teacher.
  - When it was time for independent reading, which would take place in the first 20 or so minutes of class, I would monitor the students and walk around them asking them if they liked the book they were reading and if they understood what was being said.
  - Students stepped out of class the last 10 or so minutes in order to practice a dance. They were getting ready for their performance in celebration of Hispanic heritage month.

Reflection: My first day was introductory. I was not able to fully participate with the students because of the routine that the students already had prior to my entering their educational environment.

- Fall break from Oct 2 to Oct 6
- October 11, 2017
  - There are rules that the class must follow.
    - Every class says good morning/good evening and shakes the teacher’s hand before entering the classroom.

- The students know to follow the rules and put their heads on the table and remain silent before the teacher starts the class.
- I have noticed that the students like routine or are used to it.
- The 20 minutes of reading occur again. I monitor.
- The teacher discussed with me her plans for Wednesdays since I would be going on Wednesdays.
  - Different groups would be set up and each would have a task to do that will help them in their Spanish language development. Out of the five groups, the teacher would be with one and me with another working on their homework, paragraph construction, language skills and such while the other three groups worked independently with one student leading those in her group.

Reflection: Today I was able to understand more of where the children are in the class language wise. I observed that not all students have Spanish as a native language, so this adds a new component to my project. I was more involved today and felt more comfortable with the students than I did last time.

- October 18, 2017
  - Third time at DLAMP
  - I arrive a little before 8:00 a.m., sign in as a visitor in the office, and head toward the classroom.
  - Students did a reading as a class
    - Assignment of parts to groups= all have an opportunity to speak.
    - Some students had an easier time reading in Spanish than others.
    - Students whose native language was English had a harder time transitioning from one language to the other.
  - Today the teacher decided to start the new routine of having centers (five groups).
  - She wanted to have two rotations of these groups, but time did not allow it since the students still had practice.
  - There are three different classes with the same routine and some groups have an easier time with change than others do.

Reflection: Today I was not able to get much notes. My preoccupation was with the students and with the new routine. I hope that my Spanish is proficient enough so that I can be of help to the students. Some of the vocabulary words they are learning are words I did not have to use in my daily life before, so they were new to me as well. The rate at which these students learned a new language was impressive and demonstrated that it is possible.

- October 25, 2017

- There is a routine for everyday of the week. The teacher and the students follow it.
- The reading for the class is “Androcles y el Leon”. Readings typically take 20 minutes of class time.
  - Children are paired off in groups of two to four, and they are assigned specific characters.
  - After the reading, students were broken up into ‘centros’ (centers) in order to do student group led by a group leader.
- One ‘centro’ went with teacher A while another group went with me. I read their homework, which consisted of paragraphs on a story they had previously read.
- I checked if they were missing parts or had grammatical errors. The assignment was that they were supposed to read and write the ‘inicio’ (beginning) of the story.
- November 1, 2017
  - Today is day of the dead, and the teacher, along with parents, made an altar in the classroom. The classroom is decorated with colorful skulls, a ‘calavera Catrina’, and some mothers brought in bread and hot chocolate for the students to enjoy.
  - This celebration of life was very impactful. It was a moment in which Latin culture was brought into the classroom, and the students seemed to enjoy it
  - It was exciting for the students to have something to look forward to after the class lesson and centers.

Reflection: Today was about celebrating those that are not with us anymore. There were centers today, but the focus was on culture and as used to give students the time to be creative and enjoy themselves. They painted and drew on skulls with paint, markers, colored pencils, and colored a skeleton drawing.

- November 8, 2017
  - Last time at DLAMP
  - Write down homework, word of the day, and turn in previous homework
  - Do reading as a class
    - Started a new reading in which the students take parts and read those parts in groups of two or three.
  - The students are used to the routine by now and look forward to having the small group centers.
  - Exit the site
    - I said my good-byes to each class and for those that were in small groups with me, I explained why I was no longer going to be there

- I found out that they liked having me there, and I had an impact on them.

Reflection: Through my interactions and work with them, I have noticed that their Spanish is constantly increasing and they are able to communicate more and more in Spanish. The readings that they do as a class help all the students by having those who are proficient students help those who are not proficient. My time there has given me new insight into the dual language immersion program at DLAMP. DLAMP has a unique program divides English language usage for half the day and Spanish language usage for the other half of the school day effectively.